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**AG HEALEY WARNS OF ADDICTION TREATMENT SCAMS THAT REFER
PATIENTS TO INADEQUATE OUT-OF-STATE FACILITIES**

BOSTON – After receiving multiple reports of Massachusetts residents seeking addiction treatment being recruited to centers across the country, Attorney General Maura Healey has issued an [advisory](#) warning people of scams that leave them without real care.

Recruiters often use texts or social media to recruit patients to centers in Arizona, California or Florida, and offer to pay for airfare and health insurance to cover the costs of out-of-state treatment.

According to some reports, many of these out-of-state centers provide little or no treatment to patients. In other instances, the recruiters have stopped paying insurance premiums, which has resulted in patients getting removed from treatment facilities and stranded without access to housing, health care, or the financial resources to return to Massachusetts.

“As the opioid epidemic continues to take its toll, it is so critical that people suffering from addiction get immediate access to treatment. Unfortunately, we have heard about people being recruited to out-of-state facilities, only to be left without a way home and without the care they are looking for,” AG Healey said. “We need to improve access to effective recovery options and make sure that anyone who attempts to profit off of this epidemic or take advantage of families struggling with addiction is held accountable.”

“Although there are many legitimate treatment centers across the country offering quality treatment, step down services and safe and supportive living conditions, there are many that are not,” said Joanne Peterson, Founder and Executive Director of Learn to Cope. “There needs to be more education around what to watch out for to protect yourself or your loved one. This epidemic sadly is not only taking lives every day, but people can become vulnerable to predators who are not working in the best interest of the client.”

“While quality treatment services do exist out of state, there is a need to be very careful about the who, what, and how the services are being offered,” said Maryanne Frangules,

Executive Director of the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR). “There are too many real stories about being offered free treatment services by commissioned brokers and ending up being stranded. That is not the outcome anyone should receive. Thank you to Attorney General Maura Healey for putting out an alert to educate everyone.”

AG Healey has provided the following advice for those seeking addiction treatment to protect from potential scams:

- **Be wary of unsolicited referrals:** Anyone seeking to arrange for addiction treatment out of state may be getting paid by the treatment center. In Massachusetts, it is illegal for recruiters to accept kickbacks for referring you to treatment.
- **Watch for fees:** Anyone paid a referral fee for recommending a particular treatment center does not have your best interests in mind.
- **Be cautious of free coverage:** Be wary of anyone offering to pay for your insurance coverage. They can stop paying your premiums at any time, which will result in the cancellation of your insurance.
- **Have a back-up plan:** If you accept an offer by someone to pay for travel to an out-of-state clinic, make sure you have a plan and the means to pay for a trip back home.
- **Protect your information:** Be careful about giving your personal information – including your social security number or insurance number – to a recruiter, unless you can confirm that the person is employed by a medical provider or insurance company.
- **Always double check:** If someone is offering to arrange travel or cover insurance costs for treatment, call the treatment facility or your insurance company to confirm that the person is an employee.

To safely access treatment services in Massachusetts, please contact the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Hotline at 1-800-327-5050 or visit <http://helpline-online.com>. If you have MassHealth insurance, contact the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership 1-800-495-0086 or visit www.masspartnership.com

If you believe you have been the victim of a scam, call the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Health Care Helpline at 1-888-830-6277 or file a complaint at www.eform.ago.state.ma.us.

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